



ASSESSING THE METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS OF READING STRATEGIES AMONG FRESHMEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess whether freshman students had expected level of awareness on how to regulate and monitor reading comprehension while they are engaged in academic reading materials. University students must actively process information and critically evaluate spoken, written, and electronic sources during their stay in the university. Data in this study were collected from (N=94) English and Literature department of freshman students from three Ethiopian Universities. Metacognitive Awareness Reading Strategies Inventory was used to collect data from students. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics to determine the mean of strategies employed by the learners. According to the findings English language learners, in Ethiopia, were almost near to the lower limit ($M=2.55$, $SD=1.04$) line of medium level reading strategy users. Accordingly, recommendation has been made to raise students' awareness on metacognitive reading strategies. Classroom instruction on reading strategies and activity adjustment on English reading materials was also suggested.

KEY WORDS: Metacognitive Reading strategy use, Reading comprehension, EFL

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction:

1.1. Back Ground of the study:

Just like teaching methodology, reading theories have had their shifts and transitions. Starting from the traditional view which focused on the printed form of a text and moving to the cognitive view that enhanced the role of background knowledge in addition to what appeared on the printed page; they ultimately culminated in the metacognitive view which is now in vogue. It is based on the control and manipulation that a reader can have on the act of comprehending a text. According to Block (1992), there is now no more debate on "whether reading is a bottom-up, language-based process or a top-down, knowledge-based process." It is also no more problematic to accept the influence of background knowledge on both L1 and L2 readers.

The literature has revealed that awareness and monitoring of one's comprehension processes are important aspects of skilled readers (Alexander & Jetton 2000; Makhtari & Reichard 2002). The same authors further point out that such awareness and monitoring processes are often referred to in the literature as metacognition, which can be thought of as the knowledge of the reader's cognition about reading and the self-control mechanisms they exercise when monitoring and regulating text comprehension.

Reading is not a passive, but rather an active. In fact an interactive process has been recognized for some time in native language reading but it is only recently that second /foreign language reading has been viewed as an active rather than a passive process. Early working second language reading assumed a rather passive, bottom up view of second language reading. It was viewed primarily as a decoding process of reconstructing the author's intended meaning via recognizing the printed letters and words, and building up a meaning for a text from the smallest textual units at the bottom (letters and words) to larger units at the top (phrases, clauses, links). Problems of Second Language (SL) reading and reading comprehension were viewed as being essentially decoding problems, deriving meaning from print. (Carrell, Devine, & Eskey 1988).

In the early seventies, Goodman's psycholinguistic model of reading (later named the top-down or concept-driven model) began to have an impact on views of second language reading. In this model the reader is active, makes prediction, processes information, and reconstructs a message encoded by a writer.

The top-down processing perspective into SL reading had a profound impact on the field, to an extent that it was viewed as a substitute for the bottom-up perspective, rather than its complement.

However, as schema theory research has attempted to make clear, efficient and effective reading (in L1 and L2) requires both top-down and bottom-up strategies operating interactively (Rumelhart 1977). Both top-down and bottom-up processes, functioning interactively, are necessary to an adequate understanding of second language reading and reading comprehension (Carrell, 1988 pp 1-4).

"The ability to read the written language at a reasonable rate with good comprehension has long been recognized to be as important as oral skills, if not more important." (Eskey 1970:1)

The level of reader comprehension of the text is determined by how well the reader variables (interest level in the text, purpose for reading the text, knowledge of the topic, foreign language abilities, awareness of the reading process, and level of willingness to take risks) interact with the text variables (text type, structure, syntax, and vocabulary) (Hosenfeld, 1979).

According to Joanne Devine (1988), one thing needs to be taken into consideration: readers' internalized models of the reading process are extremely important. Furthermore, Metacognitive skills allow students to monitor their progress when trying to understand and learn new material (Camahalan, 2006). Students who engage metacognitively in reading tasks aptly use related strategies and adapt them to other tasks (Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill, & Joshi, 2007). Similarly, O'Malley et al. (1985: 561) have pointed out: "students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to review their progress, accomplishments, and future directions. Further, Pressley, Snyder and Cariglia Bull (1987) suggest that metacognition helps students to be consciously aware of what they have learned, and to recognize situations in which it would be useful, and progress in using it.

The use of metacognitive strategies can distinguish poor and good readers in the sense that the former are unable to spontaneously employ effective strategies and cope with reading comprehension difficulty (Kelly et al., 2001). In fact, metacognitive behaviors or skills develop and become reinforced as "learners experience success and feel they are agents of their own learning" (Camahalan, 2006, p. 80). "The use of metacognitive strategies helps students to 'think about thinking before, during, and after they read'" (Boulware-Gooden et al., 2007, p. 70)

In the English and Literature program at Ethiopian Universities, for example, language students "learn to access, understand, and evaluate information, use it ethically, and create new material (papers, presentations, or other products) based on that information" with an emphasis on critical and creative thinking. One element in the training, credentialing, hiring, and retaining of language students relates to their language and information skills. Competent language students must be capable of both comprehending and communicating written information effectively.

1.2. Statements of problem:

Several studies in the western and African context in ESL/EFL classes researched on reading strategy and reading comprehension. To this end, linguistic deficiencies are inhibiting factors in achieving reading comprehension (Clark, 1979; Singer, 1981; Carell, 1988). In addition to this, according to Alderson and Urquhart (1984) and Singer (1981) noted that there is a need for extensive vocabulary for achieving reading comprehension. Furthermore, they explained there is a need to account for poor readers who do guess extensively, and good readers are not good simply because they are predictors, or make better use of context. Contrary to literatures a study by Mante's (2009) in Filipino bilingual high school students, metacognitive reading strategies were not a predictor of reading comprehension. The results of a similar study conducted by Ilustre (2011) in the Philippines showed that amongst the three subscales of metacognitive reading strategies, only problem solving strategies correlated positively with text comprehension. A quasi-experimental design study by Cekiso, M. and Madikiza, N. (2014), in South Africa indicated that learners who received reading strategy instruction scored both statistically and practically sig-

nificantly higher marks on the reading comprehension test than those in the control group. Recent study by Belilew Molla (2015) in Ethiopia, Dilla University, indicated that the use of reading strategies had neither positively nor negatively correlated with reading comprehension achievement. He further stated that Ethiopian students' reading comprehension is below what is expected of them. One reason why metacognition is significant is that if learners are not aware of when comprehension is breaking down and what they can do about it, they will not achieve their freshmen courses effectively.

Most EFL teachers in Ethiopia are often discouraged by the inefficient reading methods of otherwise fluent students. Many foreign-language students in secondary and tertiary institutions can't keep up with their assignments and blame their slow reading speed. Despite teachers and other concerned bodies' effort, the researcher finds students struggling word-for-word through a text, plowing on from beginning to end and stumbling at every unfamiliar item. Unfortunately, such slow and waste full procedures are commonly due to a lack of reading confidence created by the very manner of their learning in EFL classes.

Such close textual scrutiny seems to increase the anxiety that inhabits the reading flexibility of many students. They may come to believe that there is only one correct way to read, and this seriously hampers their studies.

Arising from the problem stated above the researcher posed the following research questions.

1. What metacognitive reading strategies do the participants use when reading academic texts?
2. What metacognitive reading strategies are dominantly reflected by the participants?
3. What is the overall reading strategies awareness of the participants?

1.3. Objectives of the study:

This research aims to accomplish two major objectives. It highlights the general and specific objectives.

1.3.1. General Objective:

The general objective of this study was to assess the metacognitive reading strategies employment by students while they are reading academic texts. It also indicated the most and least dominant metacognitive reading strategies used by participants.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives:

The specific objectives of this study were:

- To find out the metacognitive reading strategies use among the participants of the study
- To identify the dominant metacognitive reading strategy used by the participants of the study.
- To investigate the overall metacognitive reading strategies use

1.4. Significance of the study:

Based on the reading situation highlighted under the statement of the problem, the study was necessary so as to improve the reading comprehension of learners by training them in the use of metacognitive reading strategies. The researcher strongly believed that the study help students for negotiating the complexities of information in any written materials. If teachers are made aware of the benefits of reading strategies instruction, they are likely to improve their instructional practice and as a result improve learning outcomes. It would enable learners critical when they receive the recommendation of the study. Hence, it is important for teachers to aware in designing the necessary instruction in the classroom.

1.5. Limitation of the Study:

The result of the study would have been different if reading test had been used as a data gathering instrument. The research also did not cover the motivation and belief of students towards reading comprehension.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature:

2.1. Approaches to Reading:

"The ability to read the written language at a reasonable rate with good comprehension has long been recognized to be as important as oral skills, if not more important." (Eskey 1970:1)

2.2. What Is Metacognition?

Metacognition refers to awareness of one's own knowledge—what one does and doesn't know—and one's ability to understand, control, and manipulate one's cognitive processes (Meichenbaum, 1985). It includes knowing when and where to use particular strategies for learning and problem solving as well as how and why to use specific strategies. Metacognition is the ability to use prior knowledge to

plan a strategy for approaching a learning task; take necessary steps to problem solve, reflect on and evaluate results, and modify one's approach as needed.

2.3. Why Teach Metacognitive Skills?

Research shows that metacognitive skills can be taught to students to improve their learning (Nietfeld & Shraw, 2002; Thiede, Anderson, & Theriault, 2000). Making students experts at seeking help rather than experts at thinking about and directing their own learning.

Recent trends within the domain of reading comprehension have led to an increasing emphasis on the role of metacognitive awareness of one's cognitive and motivational processes while reading (Alexander & Jetton, 2000; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999; Pressley, 2000; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). Indeed, researchers agree that awareness and monitoring of one's comprehension processes are critically important aspects of skilled reading. Such awareness and monitoring processes are often referred to in the literature as metacognition, which can be thought of as the knowledge of the readers' cognition about reading and the self-control mechanisms they exercise when monitoring and regulating text comprehension.

The construct of metacognition has been richly built through the efforts of several prominent researchers representing diverse research traditions using various data sources. Although it is a challenge to account for all the characterizations of metacognition, we attempt, in our brief review, to reflect the richness of inquiry behind the construct, which provides a foundation for developing a valid and reliable instrument aimed at measuring readers' metacognitive awareness and control of the strategic processes invoked while reading. Researchers generally agree that metacognition refers to the "knowledge about cognitive states and abilities that can be shared among individuals while at the same time expanding the construct to include affective and motivational characteristics of thinking" (Paris & Winograd, 1990, p. 15). In his classic article "Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring," Flavell (1979) described the process of cognitive monitoring as occurring through the actions and interactions of four classes or interrelated phenomena: Metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences, goals (or tasks), and actions (or strategies). Other researchers (e.g., Wade, Trathen, & Schraw, 1990) have used examples of students' reflections about their thinking while reading to illustrate what they do when they read. Readers' reflections show how they plan, monitor, evaluate, and use information available to them as they make sense of what they read. Such reflections unveil judgments about the readers' thinking processes that serve as conventional descriptions of metacognition. Recent conceptions of reading comprehension depict efficient readers as strategic or "constructively responsive" readers who carefully orchestrate cognitive resources when reading (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995).

Researchers investigating reading comprehension monitoring among skilled and unskilled readers have long recognized the importance of metacognitive awareness in reading comprehension because it distinguishes between skilled and unskilled readers. Paris and Jacobs (1984) provided an illustration of the differences between these two types of readers: Skilled readers often engage in deliberate activities that require planful thinking, flexible strategies, and periodic self-monitoring. They think about the topic, look forward and backward in the passage, and check their own understanding as they read. Beginning readers or poor readers do not recruit and use these skills. Indeed, novice readers often seem oblivious to these strategies and the need to use them. (p. 2083)

Skilled readers, according to Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998), are good comprehenders. They differ from unskilled readers in "their use of general world knowledge to comprehend text literally as well as to draw valid inferences from texts, in their comprehension of words, and in their use of comprehension monitoring and repair strategies" (p. 62). Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) pointed out that skilled readers approach the reading task with some general tendencies. For example, they tend to be aware of what they are reading; they seem to know why they are reading; and they have a set of tentative plans or strategies for handling potential problems and for monitoring their comprehension of textual information.

Unskilled readers (typically young developing readers and some inexperienced adolescents and adults), on the other hand, are quite limited in their metacognitive knowledge about reading (Paris & Winograd, 1990). They do relatively little monitoring of their own memory, comprehension, and other cognitive tasks (Flavell, 1979; Markman, 1979) and tend to focus on reading as a decoding process rather than as a meaning-getting process (Baker & Brown, 1984). In addition, they are less likely than skilled readers to detect contradictions or resolve inconsistencies in understanding text (Snow et al., 1998). Finally, they seem not to realize that they do not understand (Garner & Reis, 1981) and as a result fail to exercise control of their reading processes (Wagner & Sternberg, 1987).

The central role of metacognition and comprehension monitoring in the current descriptions of the reading process is reflected in the steady growth of interest in reading comprehension monitoring research. The value placed by teachers and researchers on this important aspect of reading is supported in the literature that documents the link between comprehension monitoring and academic learning. Paris and Winograd (1990) maintained that metacognition can promote aca-

ademic learning and motivation. The idea is that students can enhance their learning by becoming aware of their own thinking as they read, write, and solve problems at school. Teachers can promote this awareness by simply informing students about effective problem-solving strategies and discussing cognitive and motivational characteristics of thinking. Paris and Winograd (1990) argued that such "consciousness-raising" has twin benefits: "(a) it transfers responsibility for monitoring learning from teachers to students themselves, and (b) it promotes positive self-perceptions, affect, and motivation among students.

In this manner, metacognition provides personal insights into one's own thinking and fosters independent learning" (p. 15).

Researchers have shown that students' awareness of their own reading comprehension processes can be enhanced through systematic, direct instruction (Paris & Winograd, 1990). They concurred with other researchers that strategic reading can be taught to students who need it through carefully devised instructional techniques (e.g., Brown, Armbruster, & Baker, 1986). However, they cautioned that "metacognition should not be regarded as a final objective for learning or instruction." Instead, it should be regarded as an opportunity to "provide students with knowledge and confidence that enables them to manage their own learning and empowers them to be inquisitive and zealous in their pursuits" (Paris & Winograd, 1990, p. 22).

According to Garner (1987), reading strategies, which she operationally defined as "generally deliberate, planful activities undertaken by active learners, many times to remedy perceived cognitive failure" (p. 50), facilitate reading comprehension and may be teachable. Garner (1994) concurred with Paris, Lipson, and Wixon (1994) that reading strategies can and should be learned to the point of automaticity, after which they become skills, and that learners must know not only what strategies to use but also when, where, and how to use them.

The research on metacognition and reading comprehension is extensive (for recent reviews of the multidimensional nature of text comprehension, see especially Alexander & Jetton, 2000; and Pressley, 2000). This work has been very important in prompting reading researchers to examine readers' own awareness of their cognitive and motivational processes while reading and the actions they use to monitor comprehension. In addition, such research has provided teacher educators and practicing teachers with practical suggestions for helping struggling readers increase their awareness and use of reading strategies while reading. However, there are relatively few instruments to measure students' awareness and perceived use of reading strategies while reading for academic purposes.

Efforts to develop metacognitive awareness inventories have been well intentioned but generally not satisfactory from a measurement perspective. The few instruments available have been quite useful in helping to determine metacognitive awareness and use of reading strategies among elementary school students. However, most have shortcomings that limit their use for middle- or upper level students. Criticisms of existing measures of metacognitive awareness in reading pertain mainly to the use of scales with a small number of items, limited psychometric properties, evidence of reliability and validity, or an uncertain characterization of the construct of metacognition in particular and reading in general.

For example, Jacobs and Paris (1987) developed the Index of Reading Awareness to measure metacognitive awareness of third through fifth-grade students with grade-equivalent reading abilities ranging from second to seventh grade. The scale consists of 22 multiple-choice items measuring four aspects of metacognition in reading: evaluation, planning, regulation, and conditional knowledge. Its value as a measure of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies was assessed by McLain, Gridley, and McIntosh (1991), who obtained preliminary reliability and validity data and found the scale only marginally acceptable. McLain et al. (1991) found the reliability index (.61) to be "minimal" and stated that the Index of Reading Awareness "should be used cautiously as a measure of metacognition in reading" (p. 81). Pereira-Laird and Deane (1997) developed a self-report measure called Reading Strategy Use (RSU) to assess the perceptions of adolescent students' use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies when reading narrative and expository texts. Pereira-Laird and Deane reported preliminary support for the reliability (.97) and validity of the RSU measure in assessing cognitive and metacognitive reading strategy use for adolescents. However, on close examination, we identified some critical shortcomings that lessen the validity of this scale. Several items from the scale do not appear to be reading strategies, which are deliberate actions taken by readers before, during, and after reading (e.g., "I find it hard to pay attention when reading," and "After I have been reading for a short time, the words stop making sense"). All items were forced into predetermined factors (Metacognitive and Cognitive) on the basis of judges' ratings, and then a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Because they skipped an exploratory factor analysis, Pereira-Laird and Deane retained some items that we feel are out of place, and therefore this scale, although valuable, can still be improved. Finally, it is unclear to what extent the RSU scale can be used reliably with students other than those used in the study (the majority being Caucasians) and different types of reading materials (text types used were narrative and expository).

The term metacognition was founded by (Flavell, 1979) and can be defined as a knowledge that is based on reasoning related to cognitive occurrences dealing with the certain material. However, the approach of cognitive development (Piaget, 1971) as well as cognitive and learning development (Vygotsky, 1978) exercised greater influence upon Flavell, and both paved a way for him to continue work in the field and found little metacognition problem in the area as, "a largely divided path of research- one for cognitive researchers and other for educators" (Son, 2005). Further, metacognition denotes knowledge involving cognitive processes for careful monitoring and regulating comprehension strategy of readers with certain goals (Flavell, 1976). Flavell (2004) further defined metacognition as an activity used to regulate to some extent of cognitive creativity. However, Brown and Palincsar (1987) defined metacognition is a term that refers to the knowledge of learners by controlling through cognitive methods. Brown and Palincsar (1987) proposed two problems with the term metacognition that include difficulty in judging the difference between Meta and cognitive. Tarricone (2011) explained that metacognitive are the information, its processes, monitoring, and its control for obtaining novel learning. Zimmerman and Moylan (2009) explained metacognitive that denotes to knowledge, its cognizance, and regulation of one's thinking. Different ways are adopted to define metacognition but the best definition for all times to cite by many researchers is Flavell's (1976) theory.

2.4. Metacognition and Reading Comprehension:

Most studies unveil the differences between good and poor readers. Metacognition is an approach of awareness to readers using different strategies in order to comprehend the material. Baker and Brown (1984) asserted that metacognitive knowledge is the knowledge related to the learners and their use of strategies and tasks in reading activities in class. Baker (2002) suggested that controlling in metacognition refers to self-regulatory efforts of cognitive approach including Baker's (2002) "planning", "efforts", "evaluating", "remedying", and "testing". Comprehending a text is a very complex mental process.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology:

The focus of this study, as it was explained in the introduction part, is to assess the awareness of metacognitive reading strategies and its impact on reading achievement of students in EFL class room. According to Zoltan (2007) classroom research is a broad umbrella-term for empirical investigations that use the classroom as the main research site. Thus, the term concerns any study that examines how teaching and learning takes place in context. Although given the variety of possible teaching spaces (for example, seminar rooms, language labs, computer rooms, lecture theatres) it may not be absolutely straightforward to define what a 'classroom' is, the best thing is to rely on our common sense and include any physical space in which scheduled teaching takes place. To explore students' awareness a quantitative approach specifically descriptive research design was used.

3.1. Target Population:

The target population of this study were all first year students in the department of English Language and Literature at Wachamo, Woliata Sodo and Arbaminch Universities, Ethiopia. The total population of this study was 105 who were attending their freshman courses in 2017 in the three government universities.

The participants in this study were ninety four undergraduate students studying English as a major course in Ethiopian government universities. Based on Ministry of Ethiopian Education (MoE), all participants had attended their preparatory program for two consecutive years. The two years program aims to make ready for the academic challenges for their future University courses. Besides, all were attending the social science programs. Later they joined the universities after they fulfilled the minimum criteria. All are non-English speakers for whom English is serving as a medium of instruction and acts as a Foreign Language. The participants' gender, age, and learning experience were not considered.

3.2. Sampling Method:

The researcher used purposive sampling method to select the setting since all the three universities were in the same cluster in which they are agreed to cooperate in different academic issues like: professional exchange, use of laboratory materials and research activities. The first batch was selected because their grade level especially their previous grade level, i.e. preparatory stage, was expected them to make ready in their reading comprehension skills, thinking critically and with all aspects of academic challenges. It is also believed that students are expected to demonstrate better reading performance than other students during in their preparatory programs. And hence, the real manifestation of these skills should be observed in their freshmen program. Furthermore, the department of English and Literature exposes them for more reading, evaluation, and interpretation of materials. Hence, the researcher wanted to investigate the participants whether they were equipped with the necessary reading strategies to cope up their courses during their stay in their universities.

Based on this, among the total of 105 students ninety-four freshmen from the department of English and literature were selected using convenient sampling method.

3.3. Data Gathering Instrument:

The researcher employed questionnaire to gather appropriate data from the participants. According to Zoltan (2007) and Cresswell (2003) questionnaires can yield three types of data about the respondent. Behavioral questions are among the three types of data. Behavioral questions, which are used to find out what the respondents are doing or have done in the past, focusing on actions, life-styles, habits and personal history.

In line with this, the reading strategy survey, Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSİ) (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002), consisting of thirty question items was used to obtain the required data. The MARSİ was found to be suitable for the purpose of the present study, because it measures L2 learners' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies use. The MARSİ questionnaire included three subscales of Global Strategies (13 items), Problem-Solving Strategies (9 items), and Support Strategies (8 items). According to Martinez (2008), global strategies can be defined as "generalized or global reading strategies aimed at setting the stage for the reading act: for instance, setting a purpose for reading, previewing the text content, predicting what the text is about (p. 170)." Problem-solving strategies are defined as "focused problem-solving or repair strategies used when problems develop in understanding textual information: for instance, checking one's understanding upon encountering conflicting information, re-reading for better understanding (ibid)." Support strategies use "the support mechanisms or tools aimed at sustaining responsiveness to reading: for instance, use of reference materials like dictionaries and other support systems (ibid)." The questionnaire was presented to the participants in the original version of English, and, when needed, the administrator gave Amharic translations or explanations of the question items. Almost 50 minutes in average was spent by students to complete the total 30 questions.

2.4. Data Collection Procedures:

The MARSİ questionnaire was administered entirely by the author during the regular English classes. The participants completed it anonymously, after being informed that it was to obtain information about how Ethiopian university students cope with their English reading in the academic contexts, and that it was to help design effective English literacy courses. They filled it out upon their individual consent.

The participants were asked to answer the thirty question items (Q1- Q30) on the following

5-point Likert scale:

5 "I always or almost always do so."

4 "I usually do so."

3 "I sometimes do so, and sometimes I don't."

2 "I do so only occasionally."

1 "I never or almost never do so."

3.5. Data Analysis procedure:

Data were categorized based on the three sub group of metacognitive reading strategies. Accordingly, using a separate excel-sheet questionnaire items and its given value were arranged which were gathered through the questionnaire, then the raw data were copied and pasted based on its respective items in the SPSS sheet. The SPSS produced the mean, standard deviation (SD), Maximum and Minimum value. Finally, the output was presented in the tables forms and analyzed in descriptive method. The descriptive value was calculated using SPSS version 20.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data Analysis and Discussion:

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' metacognitive reading strategies awareness. In this section, the data gathered through questionnaire were presented and discussed based on the basic research questions developed at the beginning of this study.

The first research question of the study was an attempt to find out the awareness of metacognitive reading strategies by Ethiopian EFL learners. Descriptive statistics were measured to answer the first research question. In Table 1, 2 and 3 below the overall mean score, minimum, maximum, and the standard deviation of the participants' responses to the whole instrument have been reported.

As seen below in Table 1, It is worth mentioning that based on Oxford's (Oxford, 1990) and (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002) classification, the student whose mean score is above 3.5 ($M \geq 3.5$) is considered to be a high strategy user, the one whose mean score is between 2.5 and 3.4 ($2.5 \leq M \leq 3.4$) is a medium strategy user, and the one below 2.4 ($M \leq 2.4$) is considered a low strategy user.

Table1. Questionnaire results of Global reading strategies

Descriptive statistics of Global Reading Strategies					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have a purpose in mind when I read.	94	1.00	5.00	2.2660	1.03877
think about what I know to help me understand what I read	94	1.00	5.00	2.6596	1.24048
I preview the text to see what it's about before reading it	94	1.00	5.00	2.2340	1.25660
I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose	94	1.00	4.00	1.8404	.72294
I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization	94	1.00	5.00	2.2872	1.03303
I decide what to read closely and what to ignore	94	1.00	5.00	2.4043	1.07082
I use tables, figures, and pictures in the text to increase my understanding	94	1.00	5.00	2.4574	1.14220
I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading	94	1.00	5.00	2.1170	.93735
I use typographical aids like boldface and italics to identify key information	94	1.00	5.00	3.1809	1.15435
critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text	94	1.00	4.00	1.5957	.76649
I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information.	94	1.00	5.00	2.4681	.93558
I try to guess what the material is about when I read	94	1.00	5.00	2.6596	1.15984
I check to see whether my guesses about the text are right or wrong	94	1.00	5.00	3.3723	1.11668

As can be seen in Table 1, the learners use the various kinds of reading strategies when they read academic materials but with different degrees of preferences. Students dominantly check whether their guesses are right or wrong. As it can be referred from the table the calculated mean value is (3.37) which is the highest among the strategies they use. However, students had great difference among them in using "I check to see whether my guesses about the text are right or wrong" as a strategy to negotiate reading comprehension. Contrary to this, the least strategy "I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text" is calculated mean (1.59) and its (Sd=0.76) value has got the least reading strategy. The majority of the respondents did not use this strategy to monitor their reading comprehension, and they have similar consensus among them in using the strategy.

Furthermore, to see whether the participants have differences in awareness among themselves on the strategies, a large difference was not observed. However, as the SD value (1.25) indicates in table 1, previewing the text earlier before it was read by the readers had great differences among themselves. Similarly, there was a similar consensus among the respondents on the strategy whether the content of the text fits their reading purpose. The SD value indicates (0.75) which is the least value that implies there is no great disagreement among them in using "I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose" as a strategy.

Table.2. Problem solving Reading Strategies of the three Universities

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of problem solving Reading Strategies

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading	94	1.00	5.00	2.8936	1.07231
I try to get back on track when I lose concentration	94	1.00	5.00	2.8617	1.02234
I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading	94	1.00	5.00	2.8404	.99788
When the text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I'm reading	94	1.00	5.00	2.9894	1.13113
I stop from time to time and think about what I'm reading	94	1.00	5.00	2.9894	1.07258
I try to picture or visualize information to help me remember what I read	94	1.00	5.00	3.2021	1.07343
When the text becomes difficult, I reread to increase my understanding	94	1.00	5.00	2.9468	1.12036
I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases	94	1.00	5.00	2.9149	1.14215

As it is shown in the above table participants perceived or used most among problem solving problem is “I try to picture or visualize information to help them remember what they read.” Its mean value is (M=3.20) that indicates that the highest of all the strategies. On the other hand, the least strategy used or perceived as important among problem solving strategies is “When the text

becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I'm reading”. Its calculated mean value was (M= 2.84) which is the lowest mean value compared to the rest. In line with this, the SD of this strategy is (Sd=0.99). Though it is considered lowest calculated mean among problem solving strategies, it is labeled as a medium based on Oxford's (Oxford, 1990) classification and (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002).

Table 3. Support Reading Strategies of MARS

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read	94	1.00	3.00	1.8085	.55410
When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read	94	1.00	4.00	2.3723	.86738
I summarize what I read to reflect on important information in the text	94	1.00	5.00	2.4043	.95399
I discuss what I read with others to check my understanding	94	1.00	5.00	2.6064	.85783
I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	94	1.00	5.00	2.7021	1.28540
I use reference material such as a dictionary to help me understand what I read	94	1.00	5.00	2.5000	.92457
I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read	94	1.00	4.00	2.1170	.90228
I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it	94	1.00	5.00	2.1277	.91855
I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text	94	1.00	4.00	1.9468	.67787

As it is indicated in the above table 3, the least strategy used by the participants is taking notes while reading to help them understand what they read. Its calculated mean value is (1.8). It is the lowest value among the sub-scale strategies. This indicates that students used this strategy rarely while they were engaged in academic reading materials. Its (SD=0.55) also show the lowest difference among the participants on the strategies they use during their academic reading materials. Contrary to this fact, the majority of students used underlining or circling information in the text to help them remember the text. Its mean value (2.7) also revealed that students used the strategy most compared to the rest of the strategies listed under support reading strategies. As the mean value (2.6 and 2.5) indicated in the table above, discussing with others and using reference or dictionary to achieve reading comprehension are also the most widely used strategies respectively.

Generally, students use all of the Metacognitive reading strategies while they read academic materials; however, their awareness to employ them during academic reading varies among the thirty strategies. Among the three sub-scale strategies “checking to see whether their guesses about the text are right or wrong” has the highest mean value which is (3.32). This indicates that the majority of students used this strategy as a means to achieve reading comprehension than the rest of MAR strategies. Similarly, the least MARS is indicated by the mean value of (1.62) which is stated as “I try to analyze and evaluate critically the information presented in the text”. This shows that the majority of students did not prefer to use this strategy. Its (Sd=0.93) is also indicated that there was high consensus among the participants in neglecting this strategy. This may be lack of awareness or there may have different reasons not to employ as a strategy during academic readings. It has to be left for further research.

The means of individual items ranged from 3.32 (SD=1.11) to 1.60 (SD= 0.76). Among the thirty items examined in this study, twenty three strategies were considered as moderate strategies and seven were considered as low-usage strategies, while none belonged to the range of high usage. Hence, it is clear to observe that all the three reading strategies were used dispersedly.

3. Which sub-groups of MARS was employed by the participants most?

To reveal out students overall awareness on MARS, overall mean was calculated

as shown below.

Table 4. The Mean Value of the three sub-scales MARS

Statistics				
		Global Reading strategy	Problem solving Reading strategy	Support Reading strategy
N	Valid	13	8	9
	Missing	0	5	4
Mean		2.4923	2.9548	2.2872
Std. Deviation		.48195	.11383	.30408
Minimum		1.60	2.84	1.81
Maximum		3.37	3.20	2.70

The question items are classified according to the three subscales of the MRSI reading strategies: Global Strategies (GLO), Problem-Solving Strategies (PRO), and Support Strategies (SUP) (Makhtari & Sheorey, 2002). Makhtari & Sheorey has set a key for interpreting the mean scores as follows: a mean ≤ 2.4 as low usage, a mean between 2.5 and 3.4 as moderate usage, and a mean ≥ 3.5 as high usage. This section also follows the same benchmark as it did in the previous sections.

Based on the principle indicated above, the writer attempted to investigate which groups of reading strategies was used most and which was used least by students. Based on the calculated mean value (2.95), as it is indicated in table 4, problem solving reading strategies used most. Its (Sd=0.11) value indicated that there was a common consensus among the research participants concerning problem solving strategies. Therefore, problem solving reading strategy was used moderately by the participants.

In similar vein, global reading strategy is used nearly low. Its mean value (2.42) and (Sd=.44) indicates low usage of the strategy by the participants. It is found between Problem solving and Support reading strategy in this study.

On the other hand, participants reported support reading strategies “as the least

used strategy group among the three groups. As its mean value (2.28) and (Sd=0.30) indicated in the table, it is the least strategy used compared to the mean value of the other two groups.

To be brief, As seen above in Table 3, the overall mean score demonstrates that the participants of the study were medium strategy users ($M=2.49$) as long as Global reading strategy use is concerned. It is worth mentioning that based on Oxford's (Oxford, 1990) and classification, the student whose mean score is above 3.5 ($M \geq 3.5$) is considered to be a high strategy user, the one whose mean score is between 2.5 and 3.4 ($2.5 \leq M \leq 3.4$) is a medium strategy user, and the one below 2.4 ($M \leq 2.4$) is considered a low strategy user.

Besides, The writer also checked the total awareness on problem solving strategies. In relation to this as the calculated mean value is ($M=2.95$). When the value is compared with the mean value of the theoretical framework, Mokhtari & Richard (2002) introduced the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARS), the mean lied in medium level. This indicates that participants use Problem solving Reading strategies in medium level. Its Sd=0.1138 indicates that the participants of this research had almost similar awareness as they reported in the questionnaire.

Table 5. Overall mean of MARS

Over all mean of Metacognitive Awareness of Reading strategies					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
overall mean	3	2.29	2.95	2.5554	.34843

Based on the research questions, it was the aim of the study to find out whether students usage of reading strategies low, medium or high. Based on the principles indicated by Oxford's (Oxford, 1990) and (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002) classification their overall usage was calculated and indicated in the above table. Hence, its overall mean value ($M=2.55$) indicates, students use all the thirty strategies moderately. However, the mean value is laid at the lowest margin of medium scale. Although the value is laid under moderate scale, it is possible to say the majority of students lack complete awareness on how to negotiate and monitor reading comprehension.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Implications and General Conclusion:

What researchers can do to help the readers become "constructively responsive readers" (Pressley & Afflerback, 1995; Martinez, 2008) is an important professional question to keep in mind. In this study, the writer attempted to explore the perceived use of reading strategies by three Ethiopian university students when reading in the academic contexts (Research question (1)). The participants showed that they used all strategies when they read academic material. With this the participants have shown general preferences for using global (Glob) strategies specifically, checking guesses, and using typographical aids were used most by the participants. Problem solving (PRO) strategies particularly trying to picture or visualize information, stopping from time to time and thinking about what I'm reading, and paying close attention, are the most used strategies among problem solving strategies. Among the Support (Sup) strategies a few strategies used most. Underlining or circling information and discussing what I read with others are among the strategies used most under support reading strategies. Students have also shown general preference on global (GLO) and support (SUP) strategies (Research question (2)). It agrees with the findings and implications of the prior studies on the matter of the overall tendency of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. The PRO strategies are, for example, 1) monitoring the reading process by re-reading or going back and forth, 2) adjusting the reading speed to make sure they understand, 3) using context clues to negotiate the vocabulary meaning, among others. Using comprehension markers to remember what they read, such as underlining or visualizing the information, was also found to be a frequently-used support strategy for the participants. As for the third research question, the overall awareness of students lied on between the scales of moderate or medium. It was identified as the majority of the strategies were at lowest margin based on the calculated mean. Generally, students have shown that they were moderate user of metacognitive reading strategies. However, more research needs to be done to explore on the least usage of strategies and medium reading strategies use, as well as on other detailed background of the readers' language profile and their preparatory program. Other factors like students' motivation and belief and teachers' instruction towards reading comprehension were not indicated. Other researchers may further see their metacognitive reading strategies.

The major goal of teaching metacognitive strategies lies in helping vulnerable students become independent learners and, potentially, successful thinkers. Further, teachers should design activities where students share reading strategies and comment on those that were successfully employed (Schraw & Brooks, n.d.), which is part of the thinking about doing process.

An application of cognitive psychology to education has supported the idea that learners benefit more from instruction that helps them reflect on their own learning processes (Armstrong, 1994). Teachers should make sure ESL/EFL students in particular are effectively helped with assimilating metacognitive behaviors

and sufficiently scaffolded, so that they can use the newly learned strategies and cope with both academic and nonacademic reading tasks. Therefore, it is hoped that teachers be familiar with approaches to, and ways of, teaching efficient study strategies in general, and reading metacognitive strategies in particular.

Curriculum is another variable to consider if effective teaching of metacognitive strategies is to occur. In addition to the teacher's familiarity with metacognition, the curriculum and instruction ought to include statements of why the strategy should be used, directions for implementation, and a list of sources for information on how to create similar activities from the strategy in use (Mitchell, 1996).

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APPENDIX

Dear respondents the purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the metacognitive reading strategies used by students, when they read academic or school related materials. Your response shall not be used for other purpose. Your genuine response is essential to complete this research, and important in the teaching method of reading skill in EFL class. Your response will be kept confidential. Do not write your name.

Directions: Listed below are statements about what people do when they read academic or school-related materials such as textbooks or library books.

Five numbers follow each statement (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), and each number means the following:

- 1 means "I never or almost never do this."
- 2 means "I do this only occasionally."
- 3 means "I sometimes do this" (50% of the time).
- 4 means "I usually do this."
- 5 means "I always or almost always do this."

After reading each statement, circle the number (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that applies to you using the scale provided. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to the statements in this inventory.

Strategy						
1	I have a purpose in mind when I read.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I preview the text to see what it's about before reading it.	1	2	3	4	5
5	When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I summarize what I read to reflect on important information in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I read slowly but carefully to be sure I understand what I'm reading.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I discuss what I read with others to check my understanding.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I skim the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I adjust my reading speed according to what I'm reading.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I use reference material such as a dictionary to help me understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
16	When the text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I'm reading.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I use tables, figures, and pictures in the text to increase my understanding.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I stop from time to time and think about what I'm reading.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I use context clues to help me better understand what I'm reading.	1	2	3	4	5
20	I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I try to picture or visualize information to help me remember what I read.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I use typographical aids like boldface and italics to identify key information.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I check my understanding when I come across conflicting information.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I try to guess what the material is about when I read.	1	2	3	4	5
27	When the text becomes difficult, I reread to increase my understanding.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I check to see whether my guesses about the text are right or wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	1	2	3	4	5